

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 21, 2021 8:00 AM

Printed on: April 29, 2021 4:27 PM

COMMENTS FOR: HB 4364

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

Please vote yes on HB 4364

I agree with enforcing a Class A misdemeanor for the knowing non-acceptance of an accepted poll watcher and clarification of the roll of the poll watcher.

Chris Garrett

NA

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes

If your going to cheat you first must remove the watcher.

Wendy Crawford

self - NOYB

KATY, TX

No one wants to be watched. Opening the doors for "poll watchers" will be opening a can of worms that you'll never be able to put the lid back on.

Part of election security is that there isn't anyone except actual poll workers and voters walking around the polling place. Voters go in and out. Poll workers continually assist in educating voters in use of voting machines and directing to open machines. That's it.

I'm a law-abiding individual, not considered a minority, and I hate the idea of someone videoing me while I vote. That's both offensive and intimidating. If I wanted to live in Russia with oppressive voter watchers, I'm sure I could move there.

Voting restrictions = Voter suppression

NO TO POLL WATCHERS. NO TO VOTING RESTRICTIONS.

Jessie Carlson

self

Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote yes. Protecting the rights of poll workers is key to an honest and fair election.

Larry Ringler
Self-retired
Portland, TX

Vote YES! Protecting poll workers' rights is vital to election integrity.

Carla Birk
self
Leander, TX

I am writing in support of HB 4364. During the November 2020 election poll watchers in Travis County at the EVBB were told to stay in a corner where they were unable to clearly see the signature verification, ballot remakes, and voter list checks due to the physical distance and position. Their view was additionally blocked by shelves and bins of ballots at times. A complaint and lawsuit were filed by TCRP, but the lawsuit was not settled until the twelfth and final day of counting after the great majority of ballots were already processed. This obstruction of the watchers must be clearly prohibited and there should be consequences to prevent the officials from simply ignoring the TEC.

Paula Clark
Self
Fort Worth, TX

Please vote FOR this bill

Julie Lucky
Self
Hickory Creek, TX

All poll watchers from both parties should be allowed to watch. Strict measures should be in place with a protocol in the case something happens.. and certain poll watchers are removed. It's anti American to deny one party access and another party no access. Lack of integrity from election officials would be the only reason that one party be thrown out and another party being allowed to stay.

RICHARD BOHNERT
self A/C contractor
COMFORT, TX

My name is Richard Bohnert. I live in Comfort, Texas Kerr county and I am in favor of HB 4364. What is the penalty if the judge or officer drives erratically to try to keep poll watcher from following to central counting or wherever the ballots are being delivered? Poll watchers or some one needs to be allowed to watch what is being done with ballots and how counting is conducted. Please pass this bill out of committee. Thank you.

Margaret Najvar
Self - Retired

Corpus Christi, TX

IMPORTANT - We have to protect the rights of poll workers. It is hard enough to get poll workers to work the elections, we have to protect them. Thank you.

Bonnie Seelig

Self Retired

Spicewood, TX

Support: Poll watchers are there for a purpose. If that poll watcher has the appropriate paperwork to be on site, an individual election official cannot choose to override that decision. Hopefully, with more training, everyone will be secure in their knowledge of the law, and will be poll watchers. So many times, newly trained or untrained election workers, can be intimidated by the nature of an election judge or clerk. Armed with knowledge of the law and contacts that will be responsive to the plight of an aggressive judge, the matter can be settled quickly.

I heard the suggestion of Senator Bettencourt's Election Marshals. What a great idea! Quick response is so important in elections!

Virginia Sidrony

Self Fort Bend County VDVR

Sugar Land, TX

Chairman Cain, Vice-Chairman Gonzalez, and other Elections Committee members, my name is Virginia Sidrony. I am a long-time resident of Fort Bend County, and I am a constituent of Representative Jetton.

I am extremely concerned that some of these bills do not really have anything to do with "Voting Integrity", but actually have more to do with "Voter Suppression".

HB 4364 – Lines 23, page 1 and lines 1-2, page 2, and lines 5-7, page 3, put undue unnecessary pressures on election officers, including the threat of incarceration and a \$5,000 fine. This essentially gives a poll watcher from either political party the freedom to intimidate the election officer and poll workers as well as the observer from the other political party with no consequences. This is not so much "Voting Integrity", as it is "Election Worker Intimidation". Please give more thought as to the consequences of this worrisome bill.

I sincerely hope this Committee will give careful consideration to my concerns, as well as those of others, relative to this unfortunate bill.

Thank you.

Deon Starnes

self - none

Denton, TX

I am in support of this bill. It is an important aspect of the election to help bring transparency and give voters confidence in the veracity of the outcome of the election.

Kathryn Williams

Self/retired

Austin, TX

Opposed: Rep. Jetton obviously has not worked in a polling place for long. In 2018, I worked as a clerk in an upscale grocery

store. At times there were three separate lines inside the poll, sometimes more, with people working on verification issues, voting, voting provisional ballots, signing in to assist voter, etc. Parts of the three lines often stretched into the store with the ones waiting to get in snaking through all of the store aisles. There absolutely was no room for more people to be in the station AND there was no way for a person close enough to see verification to not see people casting their ballots. This will scare and worry voters and cause them to hesitate about voting. This also will increase frustration on the part of poll workers (I worked 14 straight hours without lunch or bathroom break) and increase the danger of confrontation. None of these poll watcher power bills has addressed the issue of who has the power to intervene in disputes between or among poll watchers. This is a situation that seems all but certain to happen. With the election judge now impotent to make poll watchers leave except for voter fraud, there is no judge. I guess the judge could shoot poll watchers, but that's about the only power the Legislature's leadership is leaving judges. Jokes aside, so many new rules with criminal sanctions attached will make recruiting election judges and clerks nearly impossible to recruit. I can tell you I will never be in a polling place again. Lucky for me, I'm 71 and can vote from home, unless you outlaw that too.

Zenobia Joseph, U.S. Citizen

Self

Austin, TX

Against HB 4364, "Relating to poll watchers; creating an offense."

Floor Amendment Recommendation (April 21, 2021 Bill passed 5-4 out of Texas House Elections Committee, on or about 2:57PM).

Voting prior to accepting House Public Comment illustrates this process equates to futility: Replace free movement with 6 feet in the polling place to curtail voter intimidation. My oral testimony against HB 6 and SB 7 noted the same recommendation earlier during the 87th Texas Legislative Session.

Thanks. ~zcj
